

**Mercy Corps CAR- RECOVER II- Q1 Report: October 1<sup>st</sup> - December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Submitted: January 29, 2016**

**Reinforcing and Empowering Communities to Overcome the Effects of Conflict in Bambari and Surrounding Areas (RECOVER)  
Funded by USAID / Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)**



**RECOVER II Counselors' Team in Bambari**

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Award No: AID-OFDA-G-13-00174

Start Date: 08/17/2012

End Date: 07/31/2016

Report Date: 01/29/2016

Total Award: \$1,905,000

## 1. Executive Summary

The Reinforcing and Empowering Communities to Overcome the Effects of Conflict (RECOVER) project is the progression of previous OFDA subvention (Award No: AID-OFDA-G-13-00174) from September 23, 2013- July 31, 2016 to mitigate the negative effects of mounting conflicts and to strengthen community resilience in Bambari and its surrounding areas.

The first part of the project implementation covering the period from September 23, 2013 to September 30, 2015 is related to insecurity and it achieved the following results:

- One general meeting held with all volunteers: 28 protection committee members, 11 community counselors and 32 therapy clubs.
- 2 refresher trainings conducted for the 28 protection committee's members and the 11 community counselors (25 women and 14 men) on basic concepts of GBV, community mobilization techniques and case management.
- 209 life skill sessions and play therapy sessions were held with 720 kids.
- 124 outreach sessions were held by community counselors reaching 2,475 people (967 male and 1,508 female).
- 218 GBV outreach sessions in 10 communities were conducted by the protection committees' members reaching 6,749 people (3,044 male and 3,705 female).
- 269 survivors of gender based violence and other victims of violence were assisted in the Listening Center.
- 38 survivors of gender based violence were referred to Bambari Regional Hospital for medical assistance with medical fees paid for by Mercy Corps.
- 98 dignity kits were distributed to the GBV survivors and other vulnerable persons.
- One training sessions on GBV and protection related an issue was conducted for 30 community leaders.
- 139 mediations were held of which 131 were successful.

## 2. Program Overview

The RECOVER program was designed to respond to the mounting protection and relief needs of conflict-affected communities in the northeastern part of the Central African Republic (CAR). The Ouaka Prefecture has been particularly affected by the invasion of Séléka rebels in December 2012 and March 2013 through present time; during which time the population faced and does face widespread insecurity, human rights abuses and an unprecedented level of impunity towards perpetrators of violence. The region is one of the most vulnerable prefectures in terms of food

insecurity in the country<sup>1</sup> and is home to over 30% of those displaced by various conflicts and the malnutrition estimates are 50% country-wide and 37% estimated for Ouaka.<sup>2</sup> Almost everyone in Bambari and the surrounding areas has been affected by the conflicts either directly or indirectly. Many families struggled to rebuild their livelihoods and coped with the psychosocial effects of having experienced or witnessed various types of violence. Through the current program implementation timeline for the RECOVER program (**01 October 2015- 31 July 2016**), Mercy Corps is building upon the foundation of its previous programming in Bambari, providing much-needed assistance in the areas of psychosocial support, GBV prevention and response, health, and economic support to internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The principal objective of this phase of RECOVER II is to facilitate access to social services to the vulnerable populations as they returned to their homes after being internally displaced. The following results are expected for this second phase of the project focused on direct beneficiaries of the program:

- 1000 Non-Food items will be distributed to vulnerable persons
- 200 vulnerable households will benefit from the income generating activities to improve their revenues
- 200 houses will be rehabilitated
- 1000 vulnerable households will benefit from the distribution of aquatabs drinking water
- 34,750 IDP and their host family members will be trained on gender based violence prevention and available services (such as medical, legal, psychosocial and economic support) for the victims of such violence.

### 3. Security

In the Ouaka Prefecture where the RECOVER project is currently being implemented, the government is yet to reestablish its presence since March 2013. Despite the presence of MINUSCA forces throughout most of Bambari and its surrounding areas, armed groups such as Seleka, anti-Balaka, Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC) and Front des Republicains pour la Démocratie en Centre Afrique (FRDC) are still ruling the places, leaving the populations unprotected against all forms of human rights violations. The insecure situation has triggered the displacement of thousands of people who have abandoned their belongings and livelihood activities. Displaced populations found refuge where the international forces are located by creating temporary centers. Currently, the Prefecture has 13 IDP sites for an estimated of 12,327 households or 73,962 people.

Since the last violent events in September 2015, Bambari and its surrounding areas have not witnessed new types of violence, although vigilantes and bandits are taking the law into their own hands. Other incidences include motorcycle theft, unexplained killing of a Muslim in December 2015; in previous times these actions and events would have triggered riots, however, none occurred this time. However, in the axes the situation remains volatile. Clashes are often reported in the villages around Ngakobo to Mbomou prefecture; ambushes laid by the alleged anti Balaka from Bambari axis to Kouango were regularly reported.

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<sup>1</sup> WFP, Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in CAR, June 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Estimation of Civil Population Displacement in Zones Evaluated by the Protection Cluster in CAR, February 20, 2013

Decision by the leaders of armed groups in November 2015 in Bambari to participate in the electoral process is good news because it opens the door to security towards stabilization in the area. In addition, a phenomenon observed in the area during the dry season is the increasing and repeated fires, which have destroyed many IDP camps.

We believe that as the security situation around Bambari continues to improve, the IDPs will slowly depart from the Sangaris' sites to return to their homes in Akpe neighborhood which would facilitate their assistance by Mercy Corps.

#### 4. Performance Summary

Since the rebound of the deteriorating security situation in September 2015 in the areas covered by the RECOVER project, people who returned in May, June, July and August 2015 were forced to run away once again and they ended up in IDP sites for a second time. This situation did not allow Mercy Corps and its partners to implement Section I and II of the program which deals with economic development as mean of livelihood and reconstruction of houses destroyed by the conflict.

Currently, with the improved security situation during this quarter October- December 2015, 80 households have since returned to the two areas that covered by Mercy Corps.

<b>SECTOR #1; : Economic recovery and market systems</b>	<i>Objective: Vulnerable IPDs returning homes to restart livelihood activities</i>
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Until now, this objective has not been achieved because the IDPs were yet to return because of security. However, there is some movement of returnees and we hope to achieve this objective in the coming quarter.

<b>SECTOR #2 PROTECTION</b>	<i>Objective: Children, women, families and survivors of violence, abduction and/or displacement are identified, referred and have increased access to holistic services</i>	
Geographic Area (s)	<i>Akpa, Mbala, and Saint Joseph neighborhoods of Bambari</i>	
Beneficiaries Targeted	Total: 11,584 (6000 IDPs)	100% target
Beneficiaries Reached (Reporting Period)	Total: 1460 (1270 IDPs)	13% achieved this quarter in comparison with quarterly target
Beneficiaries Reached (Cumulative)	Total: 1460 (1270 IDPs)	4.2% achieved in comparison with annual target

Subsector: Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence					
INDICATORS	Disaggregated	Applicable	Cumulative Value Targeted	Reporting Period Reached	Cumulative Reached
Number of individuals benefitting from GBV services, by sex	Male	Yes	N/A	12	12 survivors
	Female	Yes	N/A	91	91 survivors
	Other (children)	Yes	N/A	10	10 survivors
Number of people trained in GBV prevention or response, by sex	Male	Yes	18	9	9
	Female	Yes	99	21	21
	Other	No	NA	NA	NA
Number of people trained in psychosocial support, by sex	Male	Yes	0	0	0
	Female	Yes	15	17	17
	Other (children)	Yes	0	0	0
Play therapy :Number of children enrolled	Male	Yes	240	0	0
	Female	Yes	240	0	0
	Other	No	NA	NA	NA

### **Prevention and Response to GBV**

During this quarter, activities related to section II of the project on the Protection were focused on capacity building of volunteers and recruitment of staff program facilitators.

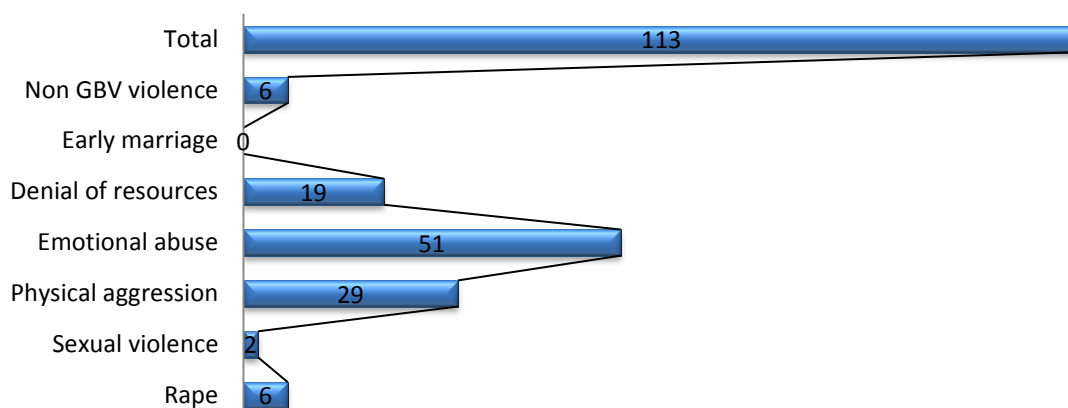
#### **a. Holistic Response to GBV Survivors**

The listening center which was rehabilitated during the first phase of the project served as a safe place to offer psychosocial support to survivors by psychosocial agents, community counselors and psychosocial program officer. 17 community counselors have benefited from enhanced capabilities building on gender based violence and technical psychosocial support to individuals and communities.

Following a three-day course from January 4 to 6 January 2016, the survivors were able manage the three mobile listening centers in the IDP sites including the Sangaris', the Livestock and the Alternative sites – this will be captured in the next quarterly report. A fourth mobile listening center is in the making for Notre Dame de Victoire (NDV) and PK8 sites, if security permits.



## Types of Violence Reported at the Bambari Listening Center - Q1 FY16



With the unstable security situation, all assisted cases at the listening centers are related to internally displaced persons and psychological violence dominates 45% of all cases. This is why the next quarter, with the support of OFDA, we will strengthen community based psychosocial activities on the sites of the displaced persons by organizing mobile listening centers; collective psychosocial support by discussion groups, games and traditional dances; Mass gathering such as female football games for displaced and returnees women are considered.

### **b. Prevention and community mobilization of GBV**

During the quarter, 15 protection committees made up of 60 members (21 men and 39) were formed. The 10 sub-groups from the sub-prefecture of Bambari and the 5 sites of IDPs are represented by a protection committee composed of 4 members. The protection committee members play a vital role in raising awareness and referencing of cases to community counselors and counseling centers. For the month of December 2015, 32 awareness sessions were conducted and affected 1270 community members who were reached by community counselors and welfare committee members on specific themes of struggle against physical violence and sexual in travel status and what if when you are a victim.

*In October and November 2015, as part of the on-going psychosocial support, together with the CHF team, the listening center registered 113 cases, of which 91% were women*

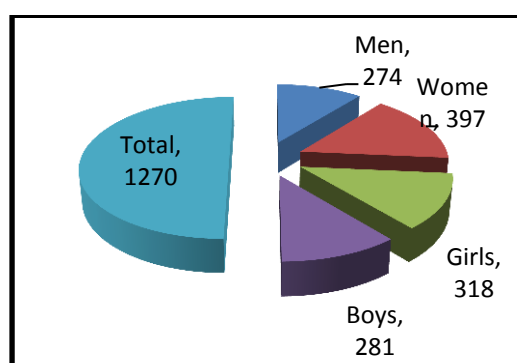
In December 2015:

- 32 awareness sessions were conducted
- 1,270 people were reached through the sessions: 274 men; 397 women; 318 girls and 281 boys

Themes developed include:

1. Physical abuse;
  2. Sexual Violence;
  3. What to do and services available to a victim of gender-based violence
- Facilitators such as Community counselors and Protection committee members also participated in the sessions.

These messages enabled survivors to expose their cases and to benefit from various services: 113 cases of psychosocial support; 28 cases of medical reference; 37 cases of marital and family mediation and 72 cases of support dignity kits.



*Women and girls representing 56% were most affected by these awareness sessions than men and boys. We are working towards reversing this trend to reach more men who are considered prime perpetrators of these forms of violence.*

### c. Play thérapie

In December 2015, 32 coaches in Bambari were identified to lead therapeutic play sessions for young people in 16 clubs of 30 youth each for a total of 480 young people. There were 4 protection clubs organized, composed of 48 youth (24 girls and 24 boys) in colleges and high schools in Bambari were created to promote child protection and to fight against GBV in school.

#### SECTOR #3

Logistics Support  
and Relief  
Commodities

*Objective: Vulnerable IDP households are able to return home and meet basic household needs*

This objective has not been realized during the first quarter of the project because of insecurity in Bambari.

## 5. Monitoring & Evaluation

Program staff is supported by the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager to ensure better collection of qualitative and quantitative data with appropriate tools; GBVIMS or GBV Information Management System is updated at the end of each month. Data is disaggregated by sex and age. The beneficiaries are targeted according to the criteria previously established by the volt intervention. With the support of the team M & E team, a baseline study was conducted during the month of December 2015, we advocate a household vulnerability study returned for the next quarter.

## 6. Coordination

Mercy Corps is a permanent member of the humanitarian organizations in the Prefecture of Ouaka and still is the co-lead of both the GBV and Cluster Protection in Bambari with UNFPA and UNHCR respectively. We also participate in the following working groups: in Shelters and Non Food Items (NFI) with UNHCR, CICR, Triangle and ACTED; in health with WHO; in Wash with UNICEF and Triangle and in Humanitarian coordination alongside OCHA. Additionally, Mercy Corps is also present in all safety meetings.

## **7. Conclusion and Upcoming Activities**

The implementation of the RECOVER II program has taken off smoothly with the staff in place, the gradual return of peace in the region and resettlement of returnees in the AKPE and Mbrepu districts entrusted to Mercy Corps according to geographical distribution of partners. In terms of shelters and the challenges encountered: NFI and Shelter support make a positive rebound in achieving the results of Section I and III for the RECOVER program for next quarter.

For the next quarter planned activities include:

- Continue with protection activities: prevention and holistic responses
- Training / Capacity building for the coaches for play therapy activities
- Mass campaigns during Women Month. Organize women soccer games.
- Organize a training session for community leaders on GBV to promote protection and social cohesion
- Conduct a household vulnerability study in areas where people return as well as their host families
- Based on the results of the vulnerability study, we will define and implement together with local leaders, local authorities the vulnerability criteria of the beneficiaries
- With all stakeholders (leaders, authorities and Mercy Corps), identify beneficiaries of Income Generating Activities(IGA)
- Together with the identified beneficiaries, determine the types of IGA that will be most profitable to develop
- Develop training curricula on chosen IGA
- Organize training of trainers by IGA types
- Organize beneficiaries in groups based on their choice of IGA
- Community awareness on the promotion of hygiene and water purification through the usage of aquatabs
- Distribution of the 1000 aquatabs to returnees households
- Monitoring post-aquatabs distribution.